



# 2010 Legislative Roundup

46th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Winter 2010

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WASHINGTON STATE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Friends,

The 2010 legislative session is over, and I'm glad to report it ended much better than it began.

I'd like to start off by thanking everyone for the great response to my January community survey. Hearing from so many people was invaluable as I made choices about how to best represent our community.

I hope you'll take a moment to look through this newsletter. You'll see information inside about how our state responded to the recession-driven budget crisis. You'll also see highlights of how our district priorities and my proposals as your representative fared in the Legislature.

I'm proud our community agreed with me that we needed a balanced response to budget problems—balance that avoided devastating budget cuts to schools and other essential priorities. Fortunately, in the end the Legislature generally agreed, though I thought this year's budget reductions were still too deep. Still, the final budget prevents the draconian budget cuts I warned against in January:

- Saves prenatal care for 50,000 women with high-risk pregnancies.
- Maintains health coverage for 65,000 people, including 16,000 children.
- Preserves financial-aid need grants for 12,300 college students.
- Continues early-learning opportunities for 1,500 three-year-olds.
- Saves funding for "meals on wheels" and other crucial senior services.

It's impossible to cover every issue in a brief newsletter. If there are other issues you'd like to hear about, just let me know.

Now that the session is over, I'm happy to be back in our North Seattle District office. I hope you'll find time to call, write or stop by. I'd love to hear from you and I will never forget that you're the reason why I'm here.

All the best to you and yours,

  
Scott White

# 2010 Legislative Roundup

## The Budget: Hard choices but Good Choices

The worst economic and budget crisis since the Great Depression forced us to make hard choices. I feel that we generally made good choices. In reply to my January survey, our community overwhelmingly supported a balanced solution to the budget crisis that avoided the extremes of relying on revenue increases alone or budget cuts alone, and that's what was done.

I can't say I'm thrilled with every budget and tax decision. But I'm relieved we avoided any property-tax increase or across-the-board sales-tax increase. It's important to understand that taxes were *not* raised to increase total spending, but rather to prevent to even deeper cuts. In fact:

- Total state general-fund tax collections for this two-year budget cycle will be about \$200 million lower than they were in 2005-07.
- The final budget is more than \$1 billion smaller than the 2007-09 budget. This is the first time the budget has actually shrunk since 1951.
- Despite our growing population, there are about 4,100 fewer general government state employees (excluding higher education) than there were three years ago.
- For every \$1 of revenues raised this year, there were \$4.50 in spending cuts.



I argued all session long that we can and must make it through this temporary recession with our permanent values intact. Our choices help ensure that we will.

The new revenues include increased taxes on bottled water, soda, candy, tobacco, mass-produced beer and some service businesses. No one likes taxes—even temporary taxes, as many of these are—but the fairly modest \$757 revenue package saved many vital services.

## Education

My community survey made clear that education continues to be our 46th District's top priority.

It needs to be. Strong public schools are the surest path to prosperity for communities and nations as well as students.

Education was not immune to the budget cuts that impacted all state-funded services, and some cuts were painful. But given the budget and political realities, I and many educators are breathing a sigh of relief. Just as importantly, we secured education funding and policy reforms that ensure we will do better in future years.

### Reforming how we fund schools.

Underfunding schools hurts kids. That's why I was a sponsor of last year's sweeping K-12 funding reforms (HB 2261), which created a Quality Education Council to set out a 10-year blueprint for meeting the state's duty to fully fund "basic education." This year, we started to make the blueprint reality by creating a clearer funding model, requiring the state to fund smaller class sizes in grades K-3 by 2017-18, boosting funding for maintenance and operations, and launching a new method of funding pupil transportation.



**Race to the Top.** To help Washington compete for a share of the Obama Administration's multi-billion dollar competitive education grants, we enacted reforms that include a new accountability system for under-performing schools, a new evaluation system for teachers and principals, improved outreach to parents, and expanded opportunities to prepare and recruit talented teachers. As a sponsor of the House version of several of these reforms, I applaud teachers, principals, classified personnel and parent groups for working together to make them possible.

**Levy changes help Seattle schools.** Since each school district's levy authority is limited by the total size of their budgets, when the state cuts funding, local schools get hit with a one-two punch: they lose the state dollars and part of their levy authority. This double-jeopardy is unfair and hurts schools, so I co-sponsored the new levy law that prevents reduced state funding for I-728 and I-732 from lowering levy lids. The law also temporarily raises levy lids by 4 percent to cushion the blow of the state budget crisis. This will be a big help to our Seattle schools.



## Highlights of my legislation

One of my jobs as your representative is to propose legislation that reflects our community's priorities. I thought you'd be interested in some highlights of legislation. Please let me know if you have ideas for laws that you'd like to see. Some of the best ideas for new laws and policies come from citizens who have seen better ways of doing things.

### Saving farmers markets from higher taxes.

When the Department of Revenue threatened to end property-tax exemptions for churches and other non-profits that host regular farmers markets—on the grounds that these markets are a commercial activity—the farmers' market community asked for my help.

I responded by designing a property-tax exemption specifically for churches and non-profits that host farmers markets as a community service, and not as a money-making exercise. I'm proud this new law will help community farmers' markets across Washington, including the markets at University Heights, Lake City, Magnolia, Capitol Hill and West Seattle.

### Protecting people and taxpayers from flood damage (2009).

Flood-related tragedies cost lives and hundreds of millions of dollars in property damage—much of it paid by taxpayers. Preventing city and county planners in Western Washington from designing "urban growth areas" in known flood hazard areas was just common sense. We listened to local officials and made limited, reasonable exceptions to address specific concerns, but we stuck to our principles and the bill passed handily.

### More local control of capital levies (2009).

Seattle school officials helped me win unanimous passage of my bill to allow more local control over capital levy funding. It allows school districts to use their capital levy dollars for major repairs and preventive maintenance, which will help their bottom line (and taxpayers) by extending the useful life of buildings and major equipment.



### Ballot reform passes unanimously!

A confusing ballot design that caused an estimated 40,000 King County voters to overlook—and fail to vote on—a Tim Eyman initiative (I-1033) last fall won't be used in Washington State again. With full support from Secretary of State Sam Reed, lawmakers unanimously approved an election reform I wrote that will require higher standards for clear election ballots.

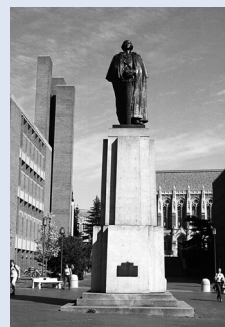
Instructions	State of Washington	King County
<b>Marking instructions</b> Use dark pencil or pen to mark your choice.  Do not use ink or other materials.  Do not use ink or other materials.	<b>State of Washington</b> Official General Election Ballot November 3, 2009	<b>King County</b> Official General Election Ballot November 3, 2009
<b>Preserving the ballot</b> Insert completed ballot into security envelope.  Insert security envelope containing completed ballot into return envelope. Sign the seal on the return envelope.	<b>State of Washington</b> Initiative Measure No. 1033 To amend the Constitution of the State of Washington to require that any initiative or referendum be approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, and to provide that any initiative or referendum approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, shall be subject to a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009.	<b>King County</b> Initiative Measure No. 1033 To amend the Constitution of the State of Washington to require that any initiative or referendum be approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, and to provide that any initiative or referendum approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, shall be subject to a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009.
<b>Marking instructions</b> To make a selection, draw a line through the candidate's name. You have the option of marking another choice.  Do not use ink or other materials.	<b>State of Washington</b> Initiative Measure No. 1033 To amend the Constitution of the State of Washington to require that any initiative or referendum be approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, and to provide that any initiative or referendum approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, shall be subject to a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009.	<b>King County</b> Initiative Measure No. 1033 To amend the Constitution of the State of Washington to require that any initiative or referendum be approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, and to provide that any initiative or referendum approved by a majority of the voters of the state in a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009, shall be subject to a referendum election held on or after November 3, 2009.

### School Construction Assistance Program (2009).

Even the darkest clouds can have silver linings. The national recession has hurt Washington families, businesses and our state. But super-low interest rates made this a perfect time to issue \$133 million in long-term state bonds to help build schools and create good jobs in the hard-hit construction industry. This 2009 bill, which I co-sponsored, also helps taxpayers, because every state dollar invested in school construction is a dollar that does not have to come from local property taxes.



### Construction options for UW and higher education (2009).



When the University of Washington and other colleges needed more options to finance construction projects without turning to state bonds, I worked with them to write a law that gives colleges more flexibility in using Building Account funds to secure financing. This law will also help build new, cutting-edge facilities at community colleges.

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## Highlights of my legislation - *continued*

**Jobs Act of 2010.** I said in January that I was a sponsor of a major Jobs Act that would also help schools and reduce energy consumption. We passed it at the last possible moment—literally two hours before the special session ended. It's a great law that will create about 30,000 jobs by using state bonds to leverage energy-efficient upgrades at schools and colleges. The energy savings of up to \$150 million a year will be a huge help to local schools. This big win for jobs, taxpayers and the environment is one of the best new laws of 2010.



**Safe Baby Bottle Bill.** What happened to the bill I co-sponsored to ban the toxic chemical bisphenol-A (BPA) from baby bottles and other food and drink containers designed for children under age three? I'm happy to report that a Senate version of our bill passed. Over 150 independent studies link BPA to cancers and other health toxic threats. It doesn't belong near children's lips. The new law will also ban BPA from sports bottles used by pregnant moms.



*Please join us!*

### 46th District Town Hall

Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>

10:30 am to Noon

**Meadowbrook Community Center**

10517 35<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

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